

Toledo is poised to take a leadership role in broadband innovation, Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur said today, thanks to a \$2.2 million federal award to the Toledo-Lucas County Public Library. The federal assistance will fund an expansion of the Kent Branch Library, acquisition of a mobile computer center, and training for small business owners and local entrepreneurs.

“High-speed Internet access is increasingly important in our modern economy,” said Kaptur, a senior member of the House Appropriations Committee. “This investment in the Toledo community will help create jobs, support advances in health care and education, and lay the groundwork for sustainable economic growth.

“For several months our library officials have spearheaded a public-private collaboration to make this project a reality. Director Clyde Scoles provided the leadership in bringing our entire community together to make a very strong application. Now we can point to a success story: the dramatic expansion of broadband opportunities in Toledo.”

“This is great testimony of the excellence of our Library system, which provides so many community services,” said Director Scoles. “The new computer center and mobile unit will reach out to so many people who otherwise could not afford high-speed Internet and computer training. This will improve the lives for residents of Lucas County.”

“I am excited for the residents of Lucas County,” said Margaret Danziger, Deputy Director. “This is a win-win situation for the Library, local partners and the community.”

Working with Congresswoman Kaptur’s office, the Toledo-Lucas County Public Library applied to National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) for an ambitious project that includes the following initiatives:

- **Major expansion of the Kent Branch Library in central Toledo into a public computer center.** Working in partnership with community institutions, the public computer center will provide enhanced computer capability for job training, health awareness and computer literacy—with a focus on unemployed workers in the manufacturing sector who have been hard hit by the recession.
- **A mobile computer center.** In the spirit of the iconic “Bookmobile,” the

newly-constructed mobile unit will extend the library's Outreach Services by delivering free education and training classes, including one-on-one instruction in basic computer skills, Internet use, job search, healthcare and preventive care awareness, and e-mail account management.

- **Expanded training for small business owners and would-be startup companies.**

Reflecting concerns over the community's economic future, the library will conduct classes for small business owners and others who are interested in starting their own companies.

Proposed class topics include business plan development, finance, health and safety regulations, and practical help in starting a small business. A key course offering will teach patrons about job searches, interviewing skills, educational opportunities, and public benefits.

The project proposes to deploy approximately 109 new work stations and upgrade approximately 23 additional computers, increasing public access to computer centers by up to 36 hours weekly and accommodating an additional 240 weekly users.

Also, it will provide computer training to as many as 18,000 residents with up to 36,000 hours of teacher-lead training annually over the life of the project.

Congresswoman Kaptur said the application recognizes that public libraries today are "more than buildings with books and movies—they're community centers. They're the places people come to get help writing resumes and looking for jobs, learn about health care options, contact the Social Security Administration, and make application for veterans benefits."

"This initiative will build a bridge across the 'digital divide' in our community by making broadband vastly more accessible in under-served neighborhoods," she added.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act) provided a total of \$7.2 billion to NTIA and the Department of Agriculture's Rural Utilities Service to fund projects that will expand access to and adoption of broadband services. NTIA is utilizing approximately \$4 billion of that funding for the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP), which provides grants to support the deployment of broadband infrastructure, enhance and expand public computer centers, and encourage sustainable adoption of broadband service.

Home to the fifth largest book collection in the state of Ohio, the award-winning Toledo-Lucas County Public Library offers a wide range of resources to the public, including classes for children and adults, computer training and Internet access, and space for community meetings.